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Letter to Rev. William Meade

Philander Chase

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K.ch. 290602 Bp. Chase
June 2. 1829

VERY DEAR SIR,

In presenting you the accompanying map of the town of Cornish, near Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, Bishop Chase has no other view than to serve the cause of religion and learning in the west of our dear country.

Kenyon College is greatly in want of funds to carry on her extensive buildings;—and having failed to obtain national aid, she is compelled, however prematurely, to turn her eye towards her own resources. The chief of these, is the possession of 4,000 acres of land, lying north of the College section of the same quantity. This tract is of so good a quality, and watered so abundantly, and lies within such convenient distance, that could the Seminary wait a little time till the buildings shall all have been entirely finished, and the great plan in full operation, there is little doubt of its being greatly and additionally enhanced in value.

But in the present circumstances, delay would be ruin. The debts of the institution must be paid. The buildings, now but partly erected, must go on and be finished immediately; for the eyes of the world are upon us, and the western country is famishing for want of means within the reach of their ability to educate their children. Thousands and tens of thousands are growing up in ignorance; and the evil, if not soon arrested, will become too great to be cured.

Urged on by this state of things Bishop Chase has caused the land to be surveyed, and a town to be laid off into in-lots and out-lots and regular streets, of which the accompanying map is an exact representation. It is situated three miles north of Kenyon College, and two miles and three quarters from Gambier. The road connecting the two places will be direct, passing through fertile and well timbered lands gently undulating all the property of the Seminary.

The stream of water which washes one side of the town, is called *Schenk's Creek*, from the late General S., who owned lands on its fertile banks. It connects itself with Vernon River, on which the College is situated, in the distance from Cornish of about four miles. It is pure as crystal, having its source in large springs from above, which gush from the hills on all sides. It is never in summer deficient in water, nor in spring or fall does it ever overflow, so as to deface its beautiful banks, or do injury to the adjacent fields. The stream has thirteen feet head and fall in running the length of the lot, and is sufficient in quantity to turn a reasonable amount of machinery.

Besides the map of the town and out-lots of Cornish accompanying this, the Surveyor took another of the in-lots alone, on which he makes his official observations, and on which is entered the certificate of its being legally recorded and acknowledged before the constituted authorities. It was intended to publish this plot also, but the expense was considered too great. The writing in that instrument, however, is here subjoined for the satisfaction of all.

A Copy of what is Officially Recorded on the Plot of the In-lots of the Town of Cornish.

“The streets are all sixty feet wide, and the alleys are twenty feet wide. The lots are all one hundred and twenty feet long east and west, by seventy feet wide, north and south. The tract, upon which the town is laid out, lies in Monroe township, Knox county, Ohio, in range twelve township, seven and section, or quarter township four; and immediately west of Schenk's Creek. About one-third of the lots lie on a piece of elevated table land, and the residue are on side lying ground, which slopes east towards Schenk's Creek, and north towards a large spring-brook of clear and beautiful water. The small spring-brook passing through the south part of the town plot contains excellent water; but the lots lying upon it are considerably broken, in consequence of the wearing down of the stream through the sloping ground.

“The tract occupied by the above plot is now covered with the natural forest, the timber of which consists of the different varieties of oak, black and white walnut, hickory, red (or slippery) elm, white ash, black cherry, &c.—with an undergrowth of sassafras, arrow wood, spice wood, &c.

“On the high table ground around Church Square, there is a few acres where the timber has been in a great measure destroyed by a violent wind. The spot is (now) clothed with a growth of underwood and grape vines. The species of grape which grows on this and the neighbouring hills is of a size something smaller than the common garden cherry, but of a pleasant flavour.

“The quality of the soil in the town and out-lots connected with it, as well as in the country in which it is situated, is of the middling character; not of the richest kind, and far from being poor. The timber is not surpassed in quality in any part of Ohio. The water of Schenk's Creek is as pure as I ever saw in any part of the United

States. The springs are very numerous. They uniformly issue from a sand-stone bed, and are as free from any mineral impregnation as rain water itself. Church Square is, as its name imports, set apart by the proprietor as a site for a church and burying-ground, and Market Square for a market and promenade. The streets and alleys as named in the plot are set apart as public property.

“Surveyed at the request and under the direction of Bishop Chase.

E. HARKNESS, *Surveyor*.

“In testimony that I have caused to be surveyed and set apart the above tract of land as a town, to be known by the name of Cornish, in manner and form as the same is described on the annexed plot, I have hereto set my hand and affixed my seal, this, the 9th day of April, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and twenty-nine.

PHILANDER CHASE, *Agent, &c.*

“*State of Ohio, Knox County, Recorder's Office, Mount Vernon, April 11, 1829.*

“On the 9th instant, the above plot was entered in my office for Record; and is this day enrolled in Book H. page 14. Attest,

HENRY B. CURTIS, *Recorder, Knox County, Ohio.*

“*State of Ohio, Knox Co. ss.*

“Personally came before me, John Wheeler, an acting Justice of the Peace, within and for the county aforesaid, the within named Philander Chase, and acknowledged the signing and sealing of the within instrument for the uses and purposes therein expressed.

“Given under my hand, this, the 9th day of April, 1829.

JOHN WHEELER, *Justice of the Peace.*”

The above described lots and out-lots of the town of Cornish, near Kenyon College, Ohio, Bishop Chase, as agent for that Seminary, now offers for sale, on the terms of \$100 for an out-lot and an in-lot taken together. The subject meets the approbation of all who duly consider it. There being twice as many in-lots as out-lots, and it being designed to sell an out-lot and an in-lot together, the purchasers are to understand that every lot adjacent to their lots respectively, will be offered *gratis* to any approved settler who will build a house thereon within a given period. It is obvious that this will *surely* and *greatly* enhance the value of the contiguous property; so that on the ground of *interest*, the purchaser may be confident his money could not be more advantageously invested. And when to this motive is joined that of benevolence to an institution now struggling with difficulties in some degree equal to its vast importance; difficulties which have compelled him who puts forth this proposal, to involve by mortgage his little all to pay the debts of the college—the reasons for making this investment become irresistible. All who have a small sum at command, and who have entered into the motives, the design, and the spirit of this undertaking, will make the purchase, and thus receive the blessing of God and of approving conscience.

PHILANDER CHASE.

Philadelphia, May 26, 1829.

P. S. June 2^d. Phil.

very dear Brother

In addition to the annexed printed letter now most respectfully addressed to you I beg leave to subjoin a few words; the object of which is to entreat you to aid Mr. Fitch the bearer with advice, your name and influence among your excellent Friends in Virginia.

If I fail in this my last effort, the consequences will be most fatal. If I succeed, our Institution will under God be put beyond the reach of doubt or danger as to the event of its final success.

The Rev. Will. Mead D.D.

mill-wood

Fred & Co

Rev.

Rev Mr. F. F. F.